Set Your Affection on Things Above, Not on Things on the Earth

Upon closer inspection, it's clear that the secular world we live in follows a standard entirely different from that of the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Scripture highlights some of the values of the world that are not found in this Kingdom: "... lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:2-4) "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:16)

Because of Adam's fall, man is born into sin through natural birth, spiritually dead, and without the right to citizenship in the Kingdom of God. (That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens... having no hope.

If we compare the righteousness of sinful man to God's righteousness, we find the difference is as vast as the gap between heaven and earth.

In the sinful condition in which man is born, it is impossible for him to enter this eternal Kingdom, where sin has no place. (Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever. Psalms 93:5; And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. Revelation 21:27)

The heavenly Kingdom was brought to earth by the Lord Jesus, so that anyone who hears the Gospel of the Kingdom and makes a firm decision to change their life may enter it. (He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1:11-12)

This Kingdom is primarily spiritual, described by Scripture as a realm of righteousness, peace, love, and joy – completely opposite to the kingdom of darkness in which the sinful man lives. (For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17)

The values found in the Kingdom of God are also found in those who belong to it. The Scripture describes God as the Lord of righteousness, the Lord of peace, and love. (He is the Rock, his work is perfect. Deuteronomy 32:4; First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace. Hebrews 7:1, 2; God is love.

1 John 4:16)

If we search the Scriptures, we will discover the character traits that define both God and the Lord Jesus. These same traits also define those who will be found worthy to dwell with Them. (We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2; He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

One essential truth we must remember is that God is perfect, and so is everything that belongs to His Kingdom.

Just as God is perfect, the Law that governs His Kingdom is perfect, and so are His ways. Therefore, we can rightly say that everything belonging to the Kingdom of God is flawless or perfect. (Your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48; The law of the Lord is perfect. Psalms 19:7; As for God, his way is perfect. Psalm 18:30)

If everything in God's dwelling place is perfect, it follows that a sinful person cannot dwell with God unless they reach the perfection required by His eternal Kingdom. (Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.)

The Lord Jesus was sent as an ambassador of this Kingdom, with the mission of bringing this Holy Territory into our hearts.

He was sent by the heavenly Father to bring to lost humanity the heavenly things – the laws that govern the Kingdom – with the purpose of transforming our lives according to the standard from above, so that we would be found worthy to dwell eternally with the Father. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

He was sent to make disciples, teaching them to live according to the laws of the heavenly Kingdom, so that through obedience to these laws, we all may grow into the full measure of His stature. (I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also. Luke 4:43)

Then these disciples were sent into all the world, to make other disciples and to enroll in the school of Christ all who desire to enter it. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20)

This school of discipleship has one goal: for the disciple to become like the Teacher. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

Things of the Kingdom of God

The Scripture teaches that the one who loves God wholeheartedly, denies themselves, and enters into a discipleship covenant with Him, becomes a new creation and is transferred into the Kingdom of glory. (Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14)

For that person, everything becomes new – these new things being from above, from His Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)

The things from above, prepared by God for us to walk in, are completely different from the things of the world. They are things that do not reach the mind of the spiritually dead person. (But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9)

Even though the things from above are simple, they are contrary to what man naturally seeks; for many of us, they are foolishness. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14)

The Lord Jesus gives us the example of the city of Jerusalem, which did not know the heavenly things brought by Him – things that could have given it peace. (If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Luke 19:42)

Through this statement, the Lord Jesus gives us a most serious warning: many of us will be in the same situation. For most people, the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 remains a mystery. (Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1)

Most think they must have unwavering confidence in the material things that may exist in the Kingdom of God or in God's promises.

Few understand that we must have unwavering confidence in the heavenly things that concern the spiritual life in the Kingdom of God. (If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? John 3:12)

The things of the Kingdom of God are referred to in Scripture as the things of God or the things of the Spirit. These are a faithful reflection of both the nature of the Kingdom and the heart of God.

The things from above are divided into two categories: - First, the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material; - Second, the fruit of the Spirit, which is the final product.

The Holy Spirit urges us to keep the Lord's commandments. And if we allow ourselves to be led by Him, we will come to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Many have heard of the fruit of the Spirit, but few have experienced walking in the things from above that produce it. They can be truly known only if we experience them by keeping the commandments of Christ, which are the raw material of the things from above. (Now the end of the commandment is charity. 1 Timothy 1:5; And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. 2 John 1:6)

The Word of Scripture tells us to seek the things of the Kingdom of God – those from above – not the things of the earth – those from below – because these heavenly things transform our character and bring peace. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1, 2)

However, in order to think about the things above and then pursue them, the main condition is to know them. Sadly, we observe that for many, the Kingdom of God and the things within it remain a mystery – they fail to come to know them.

Upon closer examination, we can see that most of those who claim to be born again (a new creation) still think about and pursue only the old, earthly things.

Dear reader, could this describe you? If you find yourself in this situation, you are in great danger!

The Apostle Paul mourns for such people, because their end will be destruction. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18-19)

These things from above, which God has prepared for us to walk in, are foolishness to the natural (carnal) man. Many do not pursue them because they do not understand that these things lead to the perfection of character.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that only those who do not know the Word of God fall into the category of the carnal man. The carnal man is anyone who rejects and does not walk according to the things of the Spirit – even if he has been baptized and claims to be born from above. (But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Matthew 13:19)

The carnal man will not accept to give up an "old thing" (such as working off the books or resisting others), which helps him get by in this life, in exchange for something new from the Kingdom – something that will bring him many "troubles" (like righteousness, which involves paying taxes or not resisting evil). The carnal man will not give up "all he has" for something whose purpose he does not understand.

Yet we must all understand that, in order to be found worthy to dwell with God, a person must come to acquire the character traits of the Lord Jesus – that is, to reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Let us take, for example, long-suffering, a character trait of the Lord Jesus and one of the most important things in the Kingdom of God. Let us ask ourselves: How can we come to have this trait imprinted in our character?

The Holy Scripture tells us that we must go through the school of patience, which does its work perfect. This is a school through which each of us must pass, because only in this way can our character be perfected. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire. James 1:2-4)

To attain this beautiful character trait, one of the things we must do is not resist those who do us harm.

Non-resistance is one of the things from above and must become a new way of life for us. When trials and hardship come, we must put it into practice, following in the footsteps of our spiritual fathers, who themselves follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 4:15)

If we look more closely, we will notice that many who believe they know God and think they are "born from above" naturally resort to resistance – whether in speech or through legal means. This is one of the earthly was people solve their many problems in this world, and they do not see why they should give it up.

To truly know God, we must give up the attitude of resistance, which is from below, and replace it with non-resistance. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

For those who have not yet practiced non-resistance – a heavenly teaching brought by the Lord Jesus – we can say from personal experience that only through it will they reach the blessed place of experiencing long-suffering, one of the defining character traits of the Lord Jesus.

The natural man runs from suffering, from humiliation... but this is the path to knowing God and perfecting our character.

Let us imagine being employed by a boss who insults us, cuts our pay, and forces us to work overtime. What would we do?

Would we look with great joy at this opportunity to cultivate long-suffering within us? Or would we be dissatisfied and resist at every opportunity, telling everyone about the difficult situation we are going through? (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. James 1:2)

If someone insults you and anger rises within you, what will you do? Will you “hold water in your mouth” so that you cannot speak, as some teach today? Or will you choose not to resist, cultivating patience as the Lord teaches us?

This is the path to truly knowing the long-suffering of the Lord Jesus. (But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 1 Peter 2:20)

If we do not understand – and are not deeply convinced – that non-resistance is one of the things of the Spirit, things that have not entered the heart of man, then we certainly will not sell all we have. We will not give up anger, one of the old, earthly things that help us maintain what the world calls a “normal life”.

Only if we love long-suffering with all our heart – one of the things hoped for, from above – and if we seek it as a treasure, only if we live according to the guidance and leading of the Spirit, only then will we come to know it. Only in this way will we come to know the heart of God and be conformed to His likeness. (And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God. John 17:3; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness. Ephesians 4:24)

If we do not love and do not keep the command from above, which tells us not to resist those who do us harm, we will not come to experience long-suffering, and even less the peace and rest for the soul. (For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom. 8:6)

Without long-suffering, you will not be able to bless those who curse you, you will not be able to be a peacemaker, nor to give food to your enemy. Likewise, we will not come to know God, who is long-suffering, full of mercy, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness. (The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. Psalms 145:8; The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness. Exodus 34:6)

If until now we have not loved the heavenly things found in the Kingdom of God – namely, the teaching of the Lord Jesus, which tells us not to resist, not to judge – if we do not find delight in His commands, then we are not drawn to the things from above and do not belong to His Kingdom. (Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. Psalms 119:92)

If we have not yet sought and walked after these things from above, then we can be certain that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us, because we do not walk after the things of the Spirit and do not live according to His guidance. (Romans 8:6)

There can be no talk of a new beginning, of being born again, if we have not cast off the old things and do not love the new things of the Kingdom. (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17,18)

Personal Reflection:

• Do you walk in non-resistance, or is resistance your way of life?

• Do you seek long-suffering as a treasure?

• Do you desire to have long-suffering as part of your character?

This post is an excerpt from the booklet "The New Birth", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.